

The Groundplane

SBARA—The South Bay Amateur Radio Association KU6S Newsletter

October, 2014
Volume 14, Issue 10



Presidents Message

A couple of years after I bought my '02 Miata, I decided to install a Yaesu FT-8800 dual-band radio. My goal was to keep a low profile, so I installed a trunk lip mount with a whip antenna. With that goal, I never considered installing an HF rig as I really felt that an HF antenna would look goofy on my Miata. Yeah...I know what you are thinking...I'm into ham radio and I'm worried about how my car looks. Go figure.

A couple of years ago we bought a Mitsubishi Montero from a friend of ours. We wanted a practical car that we could use for hauling stuff as well as for a dog...if we got one. Well...a week after we got the SUV we ended up adopting a St. Shepherd (St. Bernard/German Shepherd) named Bozley. Since the SUV was all utility vehicle, it seemed appropriate to install an HF rig. So I got the all important W.A.F. to do so...the Wife Approval Factor! You may recall my article in (the April, 2014 issue of)¹ the Groundplane, a few months back, with pictures of my installation. I was excited about the prospect of making mobile HF contacts while on trips or camping. I decided on installing the Yaesu FT-857D. It had gotten good reviews and I liked how compact it was. Deciding on an antenna was a bit more challenging. I do tend to research the heck out of items like this. The one common review I read was to stay away from the Yeasu ATAS-120...especially the ATAS-120A, due to problems of moisture getting inside. Although Yeasu improved the design with the ATAS-120B, I still didn't have a lot of confidence in it. I did like the concept of the screwdriver antenna, though, so I continued my research. Yes...although the SUV is our utility vehicle, I didn't want to go too crazy on getting a huge screwdriver antenna. I knew that I wouldn't be using the rig for HF that frequently, so I also wanted to keep the cost down. I decided to go with the Little Tarheel II. It was getting great reviews and I liked the way it was designed. It provides continuous coverage from 3.5 to 54 MHz with the included 32" antenna. I decided to go with the optional 54" antenna which provides continuous coverage from 3.4 to 30 MHz with a 1, 3, and 5 DB increase for 20, 40, and 75 Meters, respectively. I installed the Little Tarheel II on the lower left of the rear door with a hatchback mount. I also installed a short whip, for VHF/UHF, on the upper right with a smaller hatchback mount. I was a little disappointed with the Little Tarheel II, at first, as I just couldn't seem to get a contact on HF. I then put the antenna analyzer on it again and retuned everything. My first contact was Argentina. (cont'd. on Page 2).



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¹ Editor Note, Steves' article was originally published in the April, 2014 Groundplane which may be reviewed via this URL— http://www.sbara.org/groundplane/2014/SBARA_April2014.pdf





Pacificon 2014!

Celebrating 100 years of the ARRL, returns to the Santa Clara Marriott Hotel at 2700 Mission College Blvd in Santa Clara, California.

The convention takes place Friday, October 10th through Sunday, October 12th, 2014. Pacificon 2014 is the ARRL Pacific Division Convention, <http://www.pacificon.org/>

Presidents Message (cont'd. from Page 1)

Later, while on a trip to Fresno, I would chat with a guy in Tokyo, Japan. The antenna was definitely working! I use the included rocker switch, to tune the antenna with the built-in motor, mounted on the side of the center console. I have gotten good at tuning it by ear. I just listen for the noise floor to increase. I am considering installing a fancier controller that will take the guess work out of tuning it, but for now, this setup is working for me.

Fast forward to two weeks ago. We were attending the Bat Mitzvah for the daughter of a good friend. She asked if we would mind shuttling kids between the Synagogue and the party a few miles away. We said, "Sure." But this meant that the Montero had to be thoroughly cleaned inside and out. I had taken care of the interior, earlier in the week, but the outside was pretty dirty. [NOTE: The secret phrase for a free raffle ticket at the next SBARA meeting is "screwdriver antenna." Write this phrase down on a piece of paper and hand it to Ray at the raffle table for a free ticket. Limit one ticket per person.] So...on that Saturday, a few hours before the ceremony, I decided to get gas and get the car washed in one stop. I went to the Chevron station on the corner of Paseo Padre and Stevenson. I had never used that car wash before. My Miata has never been touched by an automatic carwash and never will.

I took off the short VHF/UHF whip, since it was the tallest on the Montero, and I secured the whip of the Little Tarheel II to the luggage rack with a length of double-sided Velcro that I carry for those times, like at the airport, where I need to secure the antenna so as not to experience the whap, whap, whap smacking of the whip against the ceiling of the parking garage...when I actually remember to secure it before entering. J Well...let's just say that I wasn't thinking that clearly that day. Have you ever experienced that moment of extreme clarity, in life, when hind sight is a whopping 20-20? I drove into the carwash and parked the car in position when the light said, "Stop." I was expecting an uneventful experience. But at one point, I looked in the rearview mirror and the guy in the car behind me, waiting in line for the carwash, seemed in distress. Then I took a look in the left side mirror. Imagine "MY" distress when I saw my Little Tarheel II antenna, which is normally pointing straight up, now pointing right, perpendicular to the car, with no cap and no whip antenna. <heavy sigh> What could I do? I had to just ride out the rest of the wash and rinse cycles. When the machine finally stopped and I was given the signal to drive forward, I got out of the car and rotated what was left of my screwdriver antenna back into a vertical position.

(Cont'd. on Page 6.)

It Is That Time Of Year Again

Ask any of the current SBARA board members and they will tell you that 2014 has gone by so fast. In November we will have elections for the 2015 Board elected positions, i.e., President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. Steve Wilson KG6HJU has put his name in the 'hat' as a candidate for president in 2015. Steve has been a great leader and has done a wonderful job as this year's president. Traditionally, the board presents a slate of nominees and at the November meeting, nominations are accepted from the floor. If you are asked to fill a position by the **Board Nominating Committee**, please consider saying 'yes'.

Pacificon gives you three great days of activities for one low cost: A full slate of outstanding Forum presentations about a wide range of amateur radio topics, a large Vendor Expo filled with exciting products and exhibits, an outdoor Swap Meet, great QRP activities, a Youth Forum and great Youth Activities including electronics kit building and soldering classes, a One Day License Prep Class to prepare you to pass the amateur radio Technician license examination and get your first amateur radio license, a chance to hear about and discuss important national amateur radio issues with top ARRL leaders, a chance to win radios and other great prizes throughout the convention, and perhaps the best part - *a chance to interact and share information with lots of other amateur radio enthusiasts to further (or begin) your own knowledge and to advance the hobby! For more information take a look at— <http://pacificon.org/>*

Members to Attend A Board Thank You Dinner

Did you know that one of the perks for being on the SBARA board is the yearly 'thank you' dinner?

This year the dinner is planned for Friday October 24, 2014. The board members will be treated to a wonderful meal at the Market Broiler at Pacific Commons on Auto Mall Pkwy.

Consider serving on the board as a 'member at large'. No specific duties to do but a great opportunity to learn how the SBARA board of directors conducts the club's business. Let our President Steve Wilson KG6HJU know if you would like to sit in on a meeting and consider a position of

Great America Marriott Hosts Pacificon 2014

Pacificon 2014 a Regional Centennial event Celebrating 100 years of the ARRL, returns to the Santa Clara Marriott Hotel at 2700 Mission College Blvd in Santa Clara, California. The convention takes place Friday, October 10th through Sunday, October 12th, 2014. Pacificon 2014 is the ARRL Pacific Division Convention, produced every year by the Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club (MDARC).

Did you know that one of the perks for being on the SBARA board is the yearly 'thank you' dinner?

If you do the grounding before you install the Antenna, it will make the antenna installation go a lot smoother. On Vehicles that are more composite than steel, bonding hinges on doors and hatches to the frame will also help. All ungrounded pieces of metal effect the way the Antenna tunes.

(From Tarheel)

Presidents Message (cont'd. from Page 2)

I then drove slowly through the blow dryer and put the car in park just outside. I walked back into the carwash and retrieved the antenna cap with the 56" whip still attached. The whip now had a really nice 90 degree bend in it. I put the pieces in the car and drove home...all the while thinking, "Steve...what were you thinking? This is going to be one of those expensive life lessons."

What made this all more painful, is that our services for shuttling kids between venues was NOT needed. So...yes...I went through all this for nothing. But hey...being a "glass half-full kind of guy"...the Montero was CLEAN! J

The next day I wrote an email to Bob at Tarheel antennas. I included a photo of the antenna (see below) with the whip and new 90 degree bend. I asked whether he thought it was serviceable. I received a nice email back the next day and we also spoke on the phone. He proceeded to tell me about ALL the other, similar stories he hears each week. Whether it be carwashes or garages, apparently there are numerous ways to damage an antenna. Apparently the most common is at Walmart where people get their vehicles serviced and the antenna goes right through the ceiling. Suddenly, I didn't feel so bad. I was really hoping that the repair cost would be at least half of the cost of the antenna. I shipped the antenna off and hoped for the best while expecting the worst.

Long story short (I know...too late)...I received a call the following Monday (the antenna took five days to get to Missouri via FedEx Ground). All I needed was a new coil. Parts and labor came out to less than \$100. Woohoo! I ordered a new 56" whip and they were shipping it out that day. I received the antenna five days later and installed it right away. I tuned in W1AW/7 in Idaho and made contact. I am back in business with mobile HF.

Lesson learned...ALWAYS remove ALL antennas when having the vehicle serviced or washed. Steve Wilson KG6HJU

An Introduction to Software Defined Radio

An Introduction to Software Defined Radio

by Jeffrey Pawlan, WA6KBL a Distinguished Lecturer in the IEEE MTT Society

Date: Thursday, November 13

Location:

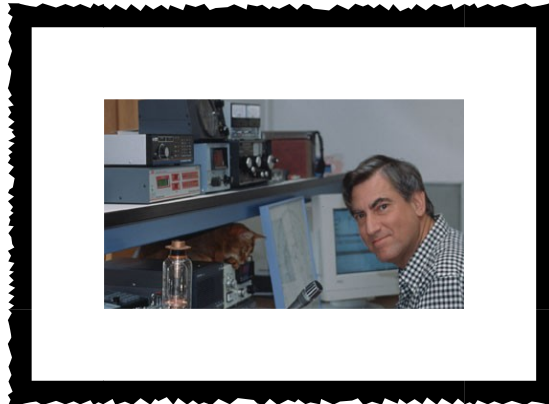
Building: Aristotle Room
Keysight (Agilent) Technologies
5301 Stevens Creek Boulevard
Santa Clara, California

Time: 06:00PM to 08:00PM (2.00 hours)

6:00 - 6:30pm, networking and snacks

6:30 - 8:00pm, presentation

Admission is Free to All



Exams will be administered at
Hurricane Electric,
48233 Warm Springs Blvd.,
Fremont.

For questions regarding License Exams, please email **Greg** at
wy6pradio@gmail.com \$15 fee. Walk-ins allowed.

Additional details in the License Exam Section on www.sbara.org Website.

Important!

Tue Oct 14, 2014, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Sat Nov 8, 2014, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Tue Dec 9, 2014, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

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Society



Fremont Repeaters & Net Information

Are you looking for your favorite Repeater? Here is information you can use!

WA6PWW— 147.015 + 600Khz, PL 103.5	600Khz, PL 123.0 K6AIR—441.525 +5Mhz, PL 123.0
WA6PWW—223.900— 500Khz, PL 107.2	ARES Net Meeting— Tuesday Evenings @ 7:30pm on 147.015+600Khz, PL 103.5
WA6PWW—442.600 +5Mhz, PL107.2	
K6AIR—146.940—	

Time to dust off those Keys....

The Slow CW net is taking place
Every Thursday and Sunday night at 7:30 pm on 144.230MHz.

The net has now its own e-mail address. Please contact us here:
“SF Bay CW Enthusiasts” <sf-bay-cw-enthusiasts at googlegroups.com>

—... ..—
Bernhard AE6YN



South Bay Amateur Radio
Association - SBARA

Founded 1974
Mailing Address
Box 8401
Fremont, Ca. 94537-8401

Web Site — www.sbara.org

SBARA Meeting Location Second Friday of the Month

**Our meeting location is at:
Hurricane Electric.
The address in Fremont is:
760 Mission Court — Come to the meeting.
Bring your HF transceiver, antenna or HT !
Talk-In 147.015Mhz. +600
Mingle with your fellow SBARA members!**

Suddenly, "It was Quiet"

I became a ham in 1987, when I was living in DU land (the Philippines), and my callsign was DU1DDP. I was a member of the national organization, Philippine Amateur Radio Association (DX1PAR) and local club, Ham Radio Philippines (DX1HRP). At that time, the local club was run by the next generation of younger hams (me included). We were very active and participated in a lot of community service activities, like the Boy Scouts' Jamboree-On-The-Air, marathons, fox hunts, etc. The club maintained 2-m and 70-cm repeaters, and had a daily evening net on 2-meters. One of the club's interest was contesting.

What follows is a hilarious, if not comical, account at one of the major contests we participated in -- CQ WPX SSB contest.

It was March 1990, and the club decided to participate in the CQ WPX SSB contest, as multi-op, single transmitter, single band, low power. However, we didn't have enough resources to put up a decent station. All we had was a beat-up Icom IC-745 and a homebrewed 15-meter 3-element yagi. We had no amplifier and no rotator. But what we had was a fantastic view and an elevation of over 2000 feet. It was our club president's 3-storey vacation house in Tagaytay City (about 35 miles south of Manila), which was facing Taal volcano. This volcano is active and is surrounded by a lake. It was a perfect location for DX, particularly Europe.

We operated as DX1HRP, and our team was composed of 8 members. There were 2 operators working 4-hour shifts -- one worked stations while the other logged. The day prior to the contest, we set up the antenna and whatever equipment we had. Because electricity wasn't stable, we had a generator on stand by as well. We tested the station and made a few local and DX contacts. For a poor man's set-up, it performed quite well. We were ready. No one spent the night at the vacation house. Everyone went back to Manila.

On contest day, the plan was for the first half of the crew to drive up to the vacation house at 6am. The 0000 UTC contest time was equivalent to 8am local time on Saturday. As the first team prepared at the site, the other members would operate from their respective stations, and sit on a frequency till the contest began. Since we operated low power, we had to call CQ, and took our chances. I was part of the second team and was sitting on a frequency. We were in constant communication with the first team as they drove up.

As the contest time drew closer, we kept in close coordination via 2-meters. I was ready to pass the frequency on to them, and they were ready as well on their end. At exactly 0000 UTC, I was expecting to hear "DX1HRP" calling CQ. Instead, I heard nothing.

Get Involved with SBARA

...come to a monthly meeting.

Our regular meetings take place the second Friday of the month at Hurricane Electric.

Pre-Meeting social dinner begins at 6pm. Then at 7pm our meeting social begins with the monthly meeting starting at 7:30pm. Everyone is welcome to attend, regardless of whether you are a member. Bring a friend! Or if you're thinking about becoming a ham, come and learn about the hobby!

...become a member.

Membership is open to all licensed radio amateurs. The annual membership fee of \$35 help support the upkeep of our repeater, as well as participate in the Annual Field Day, plus other communication events.

...join a fox hunt.

On the Saturday of the month (around 7pm) organizes a good old fashioned fox hunt. The starting point is in Fremont, Ca.

...take a VE test.

VE testing is scheduled throughout the year on the second Saturday of the month on even months and on the second Tuesday of the month. Details are in this issue of the Groundplane.

Did you know that the Philippine Amateur Radio Club was Formed in 1932.

In November 27th, 1943, the Philippine Amateur Radio Association (PARA) was organized. Leon V. grove, KA1LG, the School, Principal of the Philippine School of Arts and Trade located in corner Ayala and San Marcelino Streets, Manila became founding President. In that same year PAWA was admitted to the International Amateur Radio Union.

Suddenly, “It was Quiet”

It was dead air. For about 10 seconds or so, it was quiet. I was frantically calling on the 2-m and 70-cm repeaters, but no reply from the first team. Suddenly, the frequency I was sitting on came to life, but it was another station. It was now his frequency and was calling CQ. What in the world happened to DX1HRP???

After a few minutes, DU1CEY from the first team came on the 2-meter repeater and explained that their power went off at exactly 8am. So they had to scamper and fire up the generator. By the time they had everything running, someone else was on the frequency. Talk about Murphy's Law.

After the initial set back, the team's operation went on without any hitch. We were able to work stations we heard. Our 3-element yagi was mounted on the 3rd floor roof top. Whenever we wanted to change the antenna's orientation, someone would go up and turn it, while coordinating on HT. We had more than enough food and drinks to last us an extra day. Operators ate and slept as they pleased -- whatever worked for them.

After 40 hours, we were all tired. Operating with our resources was limiting and took its toll in the last 4 hours. We felt we've worked as many stations on 15-meters as we could, with our crude equipment. We decided to ease up and enjoy the last few hours of the contest. We ended our run, went up to the roof deck, laid down, and gazed at the stars. We all agreed to wait and watch the sun rise over the horizon. It was one spectacular sight I will never forget.

We faired quite well in the contest, considering the equipment we had. I do not recall where we eventually placed, but we definitely weren't the last in our category. It was a wonderful experience, and our first taste 48 hours of contesting. By J.J.Lerma, NW6J



Taal vlocano and surrounding lake



SBARA - Groundplane

The Groundplane is published monthly by the South Bay Amateur Radio Association. Articles and letters are always welcome. The normal deadline for material is the 20th day of each month for the next month's news-letter. Articles can be sent by email to hamradio at Comcast dot net or via U.S. Mail. Contact the Editor for details and submission guidelines.

Upcoming SBARA Events

October Action Packed Meeting

October 10th, 2014 at 7:30pm Hurricane Electric, Fremont

Amateur Exams

ARRL VEC– October 11th @ 9:30am at Hurricane Electric – 48233 Warm Springs Blvd. Fremont. **Contact: Greg** at wy6pradio@gmail.com \$15 fee. Walk-ins allowed.

***Additional information is described at Website,
www.sbara.org
Select License Exams from the Navigation URL.***

South Bay Amateur Radio Association — SBARA
The Ground Plane — KU6S
<http://www.sbara.org>
P.O. Box 8401
Fremont, Ca.

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE